INLAND CENTRAL CALIFORNIA REGION COLLABORATIVE PLANNING ASSESSMENT

MARCH 2005

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March 2005

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Prepared in cooperation with the State of California, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, Department of Transportation

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INLAND CENTRAL CALIFORNIA REGION COLLABORATIVE PLANNING ASSESSMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Background

In 2001, the Secretaries of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Resources Agency, signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing the Tri-Agency Partnership. The Secretaries committed their departments to work collaboratively to promote infrastructure project delivery while protecting and enhancing the environment. The Subcommittee for Collaborative Planning (Subcommittee) was charged with identifying places around the state where growth pressures, infrastructure needs and environmentally sensitive lands were bound to collide and could benefit from integrated collaborative planning. The Subcommittee created this project to explore how collaborative planning efforts could integrate environmental considerations with infrastructure needs early in the planning process to expedite transportation project delivery and housing.

The Subcommittee selected a 12-county area of California, known in this report as the Inland Central California Region (Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Tuolumne Counties) to examine potential opportunities for further collaborative planning. These counties were selected by the Subcommittee due to its recognition that these counties are experiencing the confluence of tremendous growth and transportation pressures in an area rich in resources, including highly productive agricultural land.

The general purpose of this study was to assess the current state of collaborative planning in this area and, if the assessment demonstrated ripeness for further efforts, recommend options for furthering collaborative planning. The report is organized according to 24 questions about the current picture of collaboration – issues on which collaborative planning is taking place, people and processes involved in collaboration, and barriers and opportunities for collaborative planning.

The Collaborative Planning Assessment was conducted by Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions (Common Ground) of the University of California at Davis Extension. Common Ground conducted 160 confidential interviews, mostly by telephone, with a broad array of people representing the public, private, and nonprofit sectors and a broad spectrum of Inland Central California issues and geographic locations.

Concepts for Action

Based on the breadth of willing participants, shared sense of urgency, awareness of negative consequences if collaboration does not occur, and opportunity for agreements that serve local, state, tribal, and federal interests, we recommend that collaborative planning efforts move forward for the Inland Central California Region.

Due to the barriers of limited resources, the history of distrust among some stakeholders, complex issues, and an absence of regional political structures, we recommend that collaborative planning efforts next focus on 2- to 4-county clusters in a way that is customized to the needs of that cluster.

We recommend that the next step in collaborative planning for the Inland Central California Region is the development of an initiative for county cluster collaborative planning: Stanislaus, Merced, and San Joaquin; Fresno and Madera; Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa; Kern, Kings, and Tulare. In order to implement this county cluster collaborative planning initiative in a way that recognizes the unique history and needs of each of these clusters, we recommend that the Tri-Agency Partnership convenes a facilitated discussion with key opinion leaders across the public sector, the private sector, and community organizations for each cluster and with the participation of any potential local convening organizations. The purpose of this discussion will be to explore the interest in moving forward collectively on a collaborative planning initiative, the appropriate stakeholders for involvement in that particular cluster, and the issue focus of the initiative.

After customized design, each cluster will then have its own facilitated collaborative planning process oriented to its needs while also engaging in issues at a scope broader than the county level. If a cluster elects not to proceed with a larger collaborative planning effort, we recommend that the Tri-Agency Partnership proceed with the interested county clusters and revisit in 2 to 3 years the specific cluster that declined the initiative.

The next step in fostering collaborative planning for this area will be for the county clusters to expand to handle larger issues as appropriate. A gathering of representatives from the county clusters could assist in the implementation of this next step once the initiatives are underway.

In order to proceed with these recommendations, the state will need to ask itself if the following conditions are present at the state level:

- The political will to follow through with the approach including implementation;
- Adequate support for a collaborative planning process from elected officials;
- The resources to implement fully the recommendations;
- The desire to both foster and play a role in this form of partnership;
- The tolerance for being a partner without playing the traditional command and control role; and
- The patience to honor and trust the process when dynamics are challenging.

Key Observations

What is the big picture of collaborative planning in the Inland Central California area?

There is considerable variety in people's perceptions of what collaborative planning is and the degree to which it is occurring in the Inland Central California area. However, there is a general belief that comprehensive and integrated planning is useful and the need is urgent. Very interested in implementation, many people mention the tension between the desire for a local scale so that results are meaningful and an awareness that the region needs integrated planning at a larger scale. Generally, the more local the collaboration, the more interested people are.

The primary perception of entities to work collaboratively is often within county boundaries. In several cases, the cities were seen as the key political boundaries either in interaction with the counties or with other cities.

To the degree people use terms for regional identity within these 12 counties, they speak in terms of the San Joaquin Valley and the Southern Sierra. While acknowledging that some issues affect many of them similarly, interviewees do not perceive the 12-county area as a single region.

There are a number of forces that tug to separate this 12-county area and a number of forces that pull the area together. Examples of forces that separate include the southward orientation of some growth issues facing Kern County and the westward orientation of some growth issues facing San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties. Examples of forces that tend to pull the area together are the wide-ranging issue of air quality, the agricultural heritage, and the interdependence of economic development issues.

Tied significantly to the state's budget challenges, there is an overall sense of scarcity and competition for resources. The sense of external threat from growth pressures offers significant urgency to the desire to unite and collaborate effectively. People tend to feel protective about the agricultural heritage of the San Joaquin Valley and the rural foothill setting of the Southern Sierra. People express urgency about a higher degree of collaboration when they feel this heritage and setting are threatened by significant growth pressures on both the San Joaquin Valley and Southern Sierra.

Overall, interviewees are very positive and willing to participate in collaborative efforts as long as those efforts lead to results and are from the bottom up. All next steps need to be mindful of local efforts, context, and results. This willingness to collaborate is present even when people identify substantial barriers to collaboration, including past competition, uncertain outcomes, and ego clashes.

Where does collaborative planning stand in regard to particular issues?

Collaborative planning is occurring in the Inland Central California Region within and across the issues of economic development, land use, housing, transportation, and environmental protection. Collaborative planning within an issue is more prevalent than collaborative planning across multiple issues. One issue that emerges repeatedly as central to collaborative planning is economic development. Another issue that emerges repeatedly in interviews is the pressure of growth. Interviewees identify information needs that are tied to quality and integration, not quantity of information.

Air Quality

Respondents are very aware of the Inland Central California Region's air quality reputation as being among "the worst in the world." According to interviewees, the presence of bad air pollution has significant and widespread implications for delayed economic development, as well as causing detrimental health concerns. Collaborative planning focused on improving air quality is considered positive, especially regarding the issue of redrawing of air district boundaries to more realistically reflect air quality attainment areas.

Water

Both water supply and water quality remain very significant issues in the Inland Central California Region. Groundwater resource overdrafts, salinity encroachment inland, and institutional and regulatory requirements are some of the specific issues stated to face policymakers and resource managers in this region. Interviewees also express concerns that water purveyors will purchase agricultural water resources from the San Joaquin Valley. While many people speak of the central nature of water as an issue in the Inland Central California Region and the need to work cooperatively on water issues, there are few instances of collaborative planning across regions and little history of cross-regional collaboration among water districts. Most interviewees portray water as overwhelming in its complexity and its political dynamics.

Land Use

The issue of land use permeates discussions of economic development, transportation systems, preservation of agricultural land, affordable housing, and habitat restoration. Many interviewees note a lack of quality review of local land use plans at the state level, few incentives for good community and county planning, and many more disincentives for good planning, especially fiscal disincentives. Another land use issue is the comparative ease of increasing subdivisions, and hence sprawl, in contrast to the more difficult planning decisions around higher density housing within city limits. In general, interviewees feel local land use planning does not necessarily consider the ramifications of local decisions on land use regionally.

Agriculture

There is uniform concern about the lack of a strategy for preserving the best agricultural land in the San Joaquin Valley and for the lack of coordination around this issue. In regard to collaborative planning, many respondents fear that the bigger land use picture, including agricultural land preservation, does not get addressed in many collaborative efforts which work at a more local, grassroots level. Interviewees expressed that the current pattern of urban development reflects a reactive stance, and rural communities within the San Joaquin Valley will continue to sprawl and spill into agricultural land without better proactive planning, resources, and long-term vision.

People are concerned that farmland is viewed as viable land in a "holding pattern" waiting for "real development," instead of as the backbone of the agricultural industry. The "fiscalization of land use" has led to competition for sales and property tax revenues and compelled jurisdictions to compete with one another. At the same time, there is also concern by some that the Inland Central California Region has placed all of its future hopes on the agricultural sector, and the San Joaquin Valley needs to think in terms beyond agriculture. However, a competing view suggests that in the long run, it is better to rely on agriculture because, while it does not provide the same level of tax revenues, it requires virtually no resources from local jurisdictions to sustain it.

Growth

Public debate around land use often converges around the "growth"/"no growth" polarity. Respondents report an increase in groups meeting to work through this dichotomy, which some describe as being the ultimate source of pressure in other sectors, such as transportation, economic development, and housing. Concerns about growth are also framed in terms of "lack of open space," the "march of subdivisions" into forest land and the foothills, impaired wildlife corridors, and unacceptable water quality impacts occurring in local watersheds.

Transportation

The "archaic" Highway 99 system is a focal point for many transportation discussions. Alternatives under discussion include the development of high speed rail and using local airports as hubs. High speed rail, in particular, raises concerns due to a lack of collaboration on the issues. People express there is no regional entity framing the issue, such as a multi-county Council of Government (COG.) The commercial and general aviation system is recognized as playing an integral role in moving goods and people in California, but its development is stymied by incompatible land uses, noise complaints, and reductions in airport services and activities. Maintaining highways with minimal funds is also expressed as a challenge. One respondent cited a $200 million shortfall in transportation dollars to maintain the nearly 3,000 miles of roads in Kern County alone. Improved rail access—both for delivering goods, and for moving people—is cited as a priority. The expansion of Amtrak services, including increasing the frequency of San

Joaquin trains and motor coaches, is seen as one viable alternative for increasing tourism to destinations such as Yosemite and Sequoia National Park.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing advocates recognize the challenge of being part of the building industry and trying to work with the Building Industry Association, California Chamber of Commerce, and real estate professionals when there are often competing visions of what constitutes smart growth. Respondents express that affordable housing needs include diverse mixes of housing, multifamily housing, and higher density housing, as well as greater attention to the issue of transient farm worker housing. Funding issues around the fiscalization of land use compromise the ability of county and city planners and nonprofit housing groups to work together effectively. Affordable housing also includes fairness and equity issues connected to the "not-in-my-backyard" mentality.

Jobs/Housing Balance

The state's lack of funding around jobs/housing balance is viewed as dampening incentives for studying good models for achieving a jobs/housing balance. State funding would encourage collaborative planning around real growth opportunities. The widely held view is that workers in the San Joaquin Valley must have jobs in the area so that workers are not forced to travel out of the region. Transportation collaboration networks are cited as successful examples of collaborative planning, particularly efforts involving San Joaquin County and East Bay counties.

Education

Especially as related to workforce development, the low rate of the area population going to college is of great concern to university, college and county administrators. Concerns about workforce education levels are linked to economic development issues. According to one respondent, in parts of Tulare County much of the labor force is described as uneducated and unskilled, with around 65% of the working population possessing a high school diploma or less. On the other hand, there is concern that there are too few jobs in the San Joaquin Valley that demand more than a high school diploma.

Education is also spoken of in terms of the need for education of policymakers and the public regarding transportation infrastructure, environmental enhancements, and economic development. Efforts in community education are desired in the areas of leadership training and small business development programs led in conjunction with local colleges and universities.

Economic Development

Small businesses are viewed as very important for the Inland Central California Region – and as having many challenges. The requirements of being bonded, carrying significant insurance, and having access to capital makes operating small businesses and doing

business with government entities "almost impossible," according to one respondent. Respondents expressed concerns that small businesses will rarely participate as part of the economic development engine of the San Joaquin Valley because they cannot meet several key conditions such as access to capital.

Environmental Protection

There is a feeling that there is little coordination at the state level regarding habitat conservation. Respondents indicate habitat connectivity issues will become more prominent unless growth is better managed, and if not properly coordinated, the Inland Central California Region could resemble the Los Angeles basin. Environmentalists are portrayed as often opposing affordable housing efforts because of habitat and traffic implications; the challenge expressed by the affordable housing perspective is to help environmentalists see that affordable housing equals smart growth. People expressing an environmental perspective are perceived as coming from outside the Inland Central California Region; as "outsiders," their understanding of local issues is often limited and their opinions are viewed with suspicion.

Poverty and Health

The poverty rate is approximately 21% in San Joaquin County, and exists in cycles of intensity, according to one respondent. The challenge for collaborative planning is that the issue is long term and complicated. Along with poverty, the record-high rates of asthma, diabetes and heart disease need addressing. The growing gap between the wealthy and the poor is also cited as a major issue in the Inland Central California Region.

What are the relationships involved in collaboration?

The champions for collaboration are distributed throughout this area, the issues, and the types of organizations. Some champions are organizational, such as the Great Valley Center, and some champions feel a personal and individual calling to a collaborative approach. Some of the champions are elected officials; many come from agencies, the non-profit sector and the private sector. These champions often have some experience with collaboration and are willing to invest substantial time as long as a collaborative effort is oriented to outcomes.

Many of the champions are quite visible in their support for collaborative planning and in their points of view on the various issues. Approximately one third of the references to champions of collaborative efforts were repeated by two or more interviewees. However, there were also mixed feelings about the capacity of these champions to convene or facilitate dialogue since they are often seen as having agendas beyond their support for collaborative planning.

Respondents characterize some potential participants as "staying away" from collaborative discussions in the face of particular issues; for example, "if the issue is concerning land use, real estate and building construction parties are not interested," according to one interviewee. Or, when the issues at hand involve water, other respondents perceive that farmers and ranchers may be resistant. Those who are in a position to reassure participants in a collaborative process are "business people and educators," according to several interviewees. The private sector and higher education representatives are perceived to bring "common sense" to the process along with greater objectivity. There is significant concern about other people not included in collaborative planning as well. Sometimes these concerns are that an agency with oversight on an issue does not appear to be an active player. Sometimes these concerns are that a group that recently immigrated lacks the political power or cultural familiarity to engage.

Interviewees identify some variation in how well relationships work across the governmental layers of federal, tribal, state, and local. Some people maintain that local collaboration works the best. The relationship with local government and the federal government is seen as the next most effective. Tribal governments and the nearby local governments have much interaction and, at times, significant conflict. Worst, in the perspective of several interviewees, is the relationship between state government and local government because of regulations and long delays in project approvals.

There is a desire to include the state at the table as a partner and caution about the state dictating conditions. Interviewees identify a mixture of a collaborative approach and a "command and control" approach from state agencies in particular. There is a desire to look to the state agencies to track the bigger picture in these issues and to set a tone for collaboration. The image of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is mixed. Some people are concerned that Caltrans wields such a strong presence that collaboration with the department is difficult.

There is a direct relationship between moving southward in the Inland Central California Region and rising distrust of state and federal government. Typically, the Southern Sierra counties and San Joaquin Valley counties work fairly independently of each other and without substantial rancor.

Several sub-areas emerge as representing ripeness for further collaboration.

- Tulare, Kings and Kern counties perceive themselves as having commonalities due to growth pressures from the Los Angeles basin and shared industry bases.
- With urban growth on the boundary between them, Fresno and Madera counties already have efforts underway to address issues collaboratively.
- Merced, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin counties have some substantial collaborative efforts within their boundaries and face some similar pressures from the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa counties have similar environmental challenges and growth patterns and, thus, represent a sub-area.

What is the process for moving forward?

Some elements of good collaboration that emerged repeatedly in conversations with interviewees are shared goals, leaders (not delegates) at the table, equal decision-making for all participants, willingness to compromise, "statespeople" to look at the big picture, and a lack of hidden agendas. Many interviewees identified the need for patience, adequate time, defined outcomes, and sufficient financial resources to engage in collaborative planning.

Multiple people spoke of a need for effective process to support collaboration including well-defined criteria for success, clear decision-making rules, explicit ground rules, and neutral facilitators to serve as guides. These criteria indicate an appreciation for process as long as it is tied to outcomes.

People are concerned that the opportunities for effective solutions to transportation, land use, natural resource, housing, and air quality issues are diminishing quickly, but there is a current window that provides for adequate timeline and the sense of urgency to work on these issues.

Facilitation that is and is perceived to be unbiased is scarce among entities in the region. There are multiple potential convening entities championing collaboration within the area, although no single entity emerges for the whole region. Examples of potential convening entities include the Great Valley Center, the Sierra Business Council, Yosemite National Park, and the California Central Valley Economic Development Corporation. Since the major emerging focuses for collaboration are sub-areas of 2 to 4 counties, there may be a beneficial match between potential convenors and potential participants.

Given this approach outlined above and based on the Assessment of Collaborative Planning, the Tri-Agency Partnership can play a vital role in supporting integrated, big picture, collaborative planning for a part of California that contains enormous vitality, includes unique resources and faces tremendous pressures.

ASSESSMENT INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In 2001, the Secretaries of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Resources Agency, signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing the Tri-Agency Partnership. The Secretaries committed their departments to work collaboratively to promote infrastructure project delivery while protecting and enhancing the environment. The Subcommittee for Collaborative Planning (Subcommittee) was charged with identifying places around the state where growth pressures, infrastructure needs and environmentally sensitive lands were bound to collide and could benefit from integrated collaborative planning. The Subcommittee (see Appendix A) created this project to explore how collaborative planning efforts could integrate environmental considerations with infrastructure needs early in the planning process to expedite transportation project delivery and housing.

Due to the mix of issues and many layers of decision-makers, the Subcommittee determined that it needed to understand the current status of collaborative planning, the challenges facing collaborative planning, networks around planning, and the opportunities for additional collaborative planning in this geographic area before developing initiatives at the state level. The Subcommittee selected Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions at University of California Davis Extension to conduct the Assessment of Collaborative Planning.

The general purpose of this study was to assess the current state of collaborative planning in this area and, if the assessment demonstrated ripeness for further efforts, recommend options to further collaborative planning. More specific goals were to identify:

- issues with promise for further collaborative planning efforts;
- experiences—both positive and negative—of significant players in the region around collaborative planning across issues, agencies, and regions;
- relevant political and institutional boundaries, structures, and relationships that serve to either enhance or inhibit collaborative planning in the region;
- projects and other ventures that have promise for productive planning across boundaries in the future; and
- potential state agency roles to further collaborative planning.

Organization of the Report

This report is organized according to questions to be answered for the Subcommittee and other readers interested in the status of collaborative planning in the Inland Central California Region.

Big Picture
What do people mean by collaboration and collaborative planning?
How do people perceive the current picture of collaboration?
To what degree do people in this area perceive themselves as a region?
What are the forces uniting and dividing the Inland Central California Region?
What is the overall level of willingness to plan collaboratively?

Substance
What are the issues on which collaboration and collaborative planning are taking place?
How do people talk about these issues?
What are the tensions within and between the issues?
What are the information needs to support collaborative planning?

Relationships
Who are the people involved in collaboration and collaborative planning?
Who is seen as excluded from the network?
What is the interaction between the issue to be discussed and the people with whom to work?
How do relationships work across levels of agencies (local, state, tribal, and federal)?
To what degree are there champions for collaboration?
How do the relationships shift in different sub-areas?

Process
How refined are the knowledge and experience about the process of collaborative planning?
What is the tolerance for process?
To what degree do people see that they have better alternatives to collaboration? To what degree is there incentive/disincentive to participate?
Is there enough time to allow for exploration of issues and complex negotiation coupled with adequate sense of urgency?
To what degree are there convenors appropriate for next steps?
To what degree are there resources to support collaboration?

Assessment
What are the barriers to collaborative planning across substance, process, and relationships?
What are the opportunities for collaborative planning across substance, process, and relationships?
Is the situation ripe for collaborative planning? If so, why? If not, why not?

The body of the report shares the information we learned from interviewees to answer each of these questions. The report concludes with concepts for action.

Geographic Scope

This Assessment of Collaborative Planning focuses on 12 counties: Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Tuolumne.

These counties comprise the San Joaquin Valley and foothill counties of the Southern Sierra. These counties were selected by the Subcommittee due to its recognition that these counties are experiencing the confluence of tremendous growth and transportation pressures in an area rich in resources, including highly productive agricultural land.

One of the research questions presented by this assessment was the degree to which these 12 counties see themselves as interconnected. The phrase "the Inland Central California Region" is used in this assessment to refer to this area and represents a construct of the study. The interviewees do not use that phrase to refer to themselves and their sense of interdependency depends, among other things, on the issue to be addressed. The analysis and recommendations reflect the Interview Team's sense that the 12-county area has multiple significant sub-areas as the building blocks for the next steps in collaborative planning.

Collaborative Planning Assessment Process

The Collaborative Planning Assessment was conducted by Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions (Common Ground) at the University of California at Davis Extension. Common Ground supports and guides agencies, private sector organizations, nonprofits, and communities as they come together and work out solutions to public policy issues including land use, water quality, species recovery, health, education, and transportation. In order to accomplish this work, Common Ground provides collaboration services (mediation, facilitation, conflict assessment, and process design), educates communities and organizations in order to build capacity in collaboration, and conducts and conveys research on what helps and hinders cooperative process and solutions.

The Interview Team was composed of six individuals with backgrounds in conflict resolution and the facilitation of collaborative problem-solving. (See Appendix B.) Interviews were conducted between April and June 2004. While some interviews were conducted in person, most of the 160 interviews were conducted by telephone. Each person contacted about an interview received a one-page summary of the project. (See Appendix C.)

A vital characteristic of each interview was the assurance of confidentiality. In order to gather the sort of information desired, each interviewee was assured that his or her comments would not be attributed individually in the analysis. Each interview was conducted according to a guiding list of questions to be covered. (See Appendix D.) Due to the variety of interests and experiences represented by the interviewees, the interviews achieved their own flow and order for addressing the listed topics. Interviews typically lasted 30 to 90 minutes.

Notes from each interview were entered in a confidential database. Interview Team members periodically reviewed results from their own interviews and the interviews overall to describe potential emerging themes. While shielded from particular results due to the need for confidentiality, the Subcommittee provided an invaluable overview role offering comments on the interview questions and emerging themes.

It is a challenge to select interviewees for such a large geographic area. Initially, the Subcommittee offered names of potential interviewees across the issues and geographic area. After an initial broad set of interviews, the Interview Team reviewed all names suggested by interviewees for factors such as representativeness across issues, geography, and sector (public, nonprofit, and private). The Interview Team paid particular attention to the name of anyone mentioned more than once as someone who should be interviewed. The list of all interviewees is included in Appendix E. The Interview Team recognizes that there are many additional knowledgeable, caring, and experienced leaders in the 12-county area that could have contributed to the study. While the results of this analysis are drawn from many voices in this 12-county region, they do not represent all of the possible views.

Few potential interviewees declined to be interviewed. Of the 32 who declined to be interviewed, most cited logistical difficulties such as vacations and schedule unavailability during the interview period.

The themes identified in the following analysis represent a synthesis of our conversations with many people. There is a tension inherent in a confidential analysis to describe the richness of the conversations and protect confidentiality. Interviewees often offered illustrating stories that were invaluable in our understanding of the issues. The examples and illustrations offered in this analysis are intended to help the observations "come alive" and are masked to protect confidentiality.

The analysis of interview results was conducted with the full involvement of the Interview Team during July and August, 2004.

Definitions

A brief internet search for the phrase "collaborative planning" generates websites focused on, among other topics, how schoolroom teachers work together, how manufacturers manage inventory, and how communities can have a voice in land use decisions. Among the dictionary definitions for "collaborate" is "to cooperate with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected." Among the dictionary definitions for "planning" is "the establishment of goals, policies, and procedures for a social or economic unit." (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary.)

With a phrase as broad in its possible interpretations as "collaborative planning," this assessment did not attempt to define the term for people being interviewed. However, interviewees were asked for their opinion on the status of collaborative planning in the region and to describe a successful collaboration. From the responses to such questions, it was possible to derive a sense of that person's description of "collaborative planning."

We discuss below the differing uses of the term "collaborative planning" among interviewees. While the term was used differently by different interviewees, all respondents framed responses to questions about "collaborative planning" in terms of deliberate and productive work across the boundaries of issues, governmental structures, and/or interests toward a future quality of life.

ASSESSMENT OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Big Picture

What do people mean by collaboration and collaborative planning?

The recurring theme in descriptions of collaboration and collaborative planning among the people we interviewed is deliberate and productive work across the boundaries of issues, government structures, and/or interests toward a future quality of life. Interesting differences also emerged, however, in how people use these terms.

Interpretation of the phrase "collaboration" varies as does interpretation of the phrase "collaborative planning." Sometimes interviewees define those terms very broadly to include any advocacy effort and sometimes they use the terms very narrowly. In the course of our interviews, we learned of examples of entities working across issues or across boundaries – examples that the interviewees identified neither as collaboration nor as collaborative planning.

Collaborative planning is by nature future-oriented, and includes issues that transcend the details of specific projects. There is an expectation of outcomes that will benefit communities in the long term, and most important, an institutionalized process that focuses equally on strengthening of relationships of parties involved, and on results that encourage continued alliance around mutually important issues.

There are significant differences in focus for professional planners and for other community members when using the term "collaborative planning." People in the planning profession tended to focus more on the professional practice of planning in their picture of collaborative planning. With this perspective, planning is a formal process delineated by local, state, and/or federal regulations, a process where community voices inform those with planning expertise. Other community members tended to focus on a broad definition of collaboration when they spoke of collaborative planning. With this perspective, planning is a process every person, family, organization, and community conducts, and people with professional expertise inform the community discussion. These differences are summarized in the table below.

	Collaborative Planning for Professional Planners	Collaborative Planning for Other Community Members
Primary Focus	Collaborative **Planning**	**Collaborative** Planning
Role of Community Voices	Inform process as delineated by federal, state, and/or local governmental regulations	Central to community dialogue which is at the center of planning for its future
Role of Professional Experts	Central	Resource
Role of Outreach to All	Helpful	Vital

Planners in particular are comfortable with the term collaborative planning or joint planning. Community members are more likely to use either the term collaboration or partnership to describe the process of working together across boundaries around growth issues.

How do people perceive the current picture of collaboration?

There is considerable variety in people's perceptions of the current picture of collaborative planning in this 12-county area. Some people see collaborative planning increasing in amount and effectiveness for this area and are very hopeful for the future of collaborative planning. Other people feel that the collaborative planning to this point has been quite limited – by a lack of resources, parameters on decision-making, a lack of political will, or a lack of necessity – and do not have a high degree of hope that the necessary collaborative planning will occur in time to protect the region's quality of life. One interviewee compared the degree of collaboration across issues to the Olympic rings – "they intersect but not enough."

In general, people feel an urgency to plan collaboratively regardless of whether they feel the current status of collaborative planning is healthy overall. There is a general belief that comprehensive planning is a useful exercise, as long as differing views of desired ultimate vision were clarified (e.g., what do people mean when they say they want "good schools?" "Clean air?").

People are not content to stop with the planning process – they want implementation. Many people feel organizations interested in collaboration need to get beyond the "planning" stages to focus more on "doing". Or as one interviewee put it, "we need to move from 'map makers' to 'dirt turners'." A number of interviewees feel that implementation is a required component of collaborative planning.

Many people mention the tension between the desire for a local scale so that results are meaningful and an awareness that the region needs integrated planning at a larger scale. People tend to see the issues as tied to a particular and local sense of place but also recognize that the pressures on these 12 counties are of a larger scale – and need to be addressed at a larger scale.

The more local the collaboration, the more interested people are. People like to work locally because they have more control of the process. Communication between parties locally is generally described as good. Local collaboration may include stakeholders from the state, tribal, and federal levels but needs to be tied to local issues and fine-tuned for the setting. Many interviewees made the point that "one size does not fit all."

Views of the current reality of collaborative planning focus on its potential as a stabilizing cross-regional planning force, which works particularly well at the local level. Local issues predominate on a day to day basis, and many respondents speak proudly of intra-county collaborations between agencies and the community. Collaborating locally means that there are fewer hoops to jump through, referring generally to regulations coming from state and federal levels. At the same time, local collaboration is precarious, depending upon the right combination of policy, timing, commitment of participants, and resource factors. Very often collaboration is perceived as "parochial," with no clear path to partnering across city and county lines.

To what degree do people in this area perceive themselves as a region?

While acknowledging that some issues affect many of them similarly, interviewees do not perceive the 12-county area as a single region. As stated above, this 12-county area includes Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Tuolumne counties. While the people we interviewed see issues such as air quality affecting a large portion of the 12-county region, the primary perception of entities to work collaboratively was smaller than the 12-county area.

The primary political boundary for collaborative planning for most of the interviewees is at the county or city level. This 12-county area is served by 8 Councils of Government (COGs): Calaveras Council of Governments, Council of Fresno County Governments, Kern Council of Governments, Kings County Association of Governments, Merced County Association of Governments, San Joaquin Council of Governments, Stanislaus Council of Governments, and Tulare County Association of Governments. Unlike COGs elsewhere in California, these Councils of Government all exist within county boundaries. While interviewees give examples of collaborations across county boundaries, the counties or the Councils of Government are usually expressed as representing the primary political boundaries. In several cases, the cities were seen as the key political boundaries either in interaction with the counties or other cities.

To the degree people use terms for regional identity within these 12 counties, they speak in terms of the San Joaquin Valley and the Southern Sierra. The counties identified as part of the San Joaquin Valley are San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern. To the degree Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa interviewees refer to a regional identity, it is as part of the Southern Sierra or, depending on the issue, as part of the Sacramento region.

Many respondents view the sheer size and complexity of the Inland Central California Region as a challenging situation for collaboration to begin, let alone thrive. While there is no unifying regional identity to the region, a number of "virtual boundaries" became evident during the course of these discussions with respondents.

In general, the Southern Sierra counties of Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne (and occasionally Mariposa) feel they have little in common with counties to the west and south, because of their primary focus on protecting the fragile Southern Sierra environment and tourism. This contrasts with the predominant agricultural focus of the San Joaquin Valley, a term used frequently by study respondents in reference to the eight counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Kings, Kern, Tulare, and Madera. Indeed, some Southern Sierra respondents feel they have little in common with each other, and struggle to work across bordering county lines in any direction. The exceptions were collaborative efforts around air quality and transportation links, where they work jointly with San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties.

While there is considerable disagreement as to how closely Southern Sierra counties want to work with the larger, agriculture-based counties, there is also recognition of their interdependency with San Joaquin Valley issues, particularly air pollution and traffic issues. Land development trends also differ—valley towns grow out concentrically, and foothill land tends to be partitioned into 5-10 acre ranchettes.

Stanislaus, San Joaquin, and Merced Counties work together, particularly through their respective Councils of Government. San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties are drawn strongly into relationships with the Bay Area, particularly due to common housing, transportation, and workforce issues. Thousands of San Joaquin County and Stanislaus County residents have commuted regularly to Bay Area employers since the 1980s.

Although both Fresno County and Madera County are interested in cross-jurisdictional issues associated with growth and a proposed new San Joaquin River crossing along Highway 41, there is considerable tension between the two in the form of lawsuits, making collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries extremely difficult.

Kern, Kings, and Tulare Counties share an economic base of agriculture and the oil and gas industry. Economic development issues and heightened concerns about air quality link these three counties. In general, the southern counties of the Inland Central California Region are often drawn into economic and housing relationships with the Los Angeles Basin.

Interstate 5 is viewed by some in Kings County as a feature dividing the Inland Central California Region from the counties and communities located west of the Interstate. Similarly, "north of Merced" and "south of Merced" are perceived as having different sets of issues. Fresno County is considered to have a large political and economic influence in the region. The county itself appears to be split between the east side, with smaller farms, and west, with large farms.

Some planners talk of wanting to get to a new level of "borderless" government, which would be more issue-focused, and not limited by county boundaries. As one planner put it, "I can throw boundaries around things if I have to." More important than political boundaries to many interviewees are the questions and concerns driving collaborative efforts and who should be involved. Other people object to any collaboration that dissolves or adjusts current boundaries.

What are the forces uniting and dividing the Inland Central California Region?

There are a number of forces that tug to separate the 12-county area and a number of forces that pull the area together. Examples of forces that separate include the southward orientation of some growth issues facing Kern County and the westward orientation of some growth issues facing San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties. Examples of forces that tend to pull the area together are the wide-ranging issue of air quality, the agricultural heritage, and the interdependence of economic development issues.

Tied significantly to the state's budget challenges, there is an overall sense of scarcity and competition for resources. Tied to the competition for resources, there is a competition for recognition by potential funding organizations. The competition is both within the Inland Central California Region and between this area and, in particular, the Bay Area and Southern California. Internal competition for resources tends to fracture the area while competition against other regions tends to unite the area.

The sense of external threat from growth pressures offers significant urgency to the desire to unite and collaborate effectively. People tend to feel protective about the agricultural heritage of the San Joaquin Valley and the quiet foothill setting of the Southern Sierra. People feel urgent about a higher degree of collaboration when they feel this heritage and setting are threatened by significant growth pressures on both the San Joaquin Valley and Southern Sierra.

What is the overall level of willingness to plan collaboratively?

Overall, interviewees are very positive and willing to participate in collaborative efforts as long as those efforts lead to results and are from the bottom up. All next steps need to be mindful of local efforts, context, and results. This willingness to collaborate is present even when people identify substantial barriers to collaboration, including past competition, uncertain outcomes, and ego clashes.

Substance

What are the issues on which collaboration and collaborative planning are taking place?

Collaborative planning is occurring in this area within and across the issues of economic development, land use, housing, transportation, and environmental protection. Collaborative planning within an issue is more prevalent than collaborative planning across multiple issues. The resulting collaborative efforts often reside within county boundaries.

One issue that emerges repeatedly as central to collaborative planning is economic development. There is significant work already regarding economic development and people working in other issue areas tend to see economic development as a theme that weaves through all issues.

Another issue that emerges repeatedly in interviews is the pressure of growth. Interviewees speak broadly of the impacts of a rising population and resulting demands for housing and jobs.

Context for specific issues is as follows:

Air Quality

Respondents are very aware of the Inland Central California Region's air quality reputation as being among "the worst in the world." The presence of bad air pollution has significant and widespread implications for delayed economic development, as well as causing detrimental health concerns. Some respondents believe that serious levels of air pollution are in part due to the "unusual practice" of buying and selling air quality emission credits. There is a stated fear of "shutting down the region's ability to provide mobility for residents."

Collaborative planning focused on improving air quality is considered positive, especially regarding the issue of redrawing of air district boundaries to more realistically reflect air quality attainment areas. Recently, effective collaborative planning has resulted in developing regionwide consensus on the non-attainment condition of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. The goal was reached when many diverse sectors within the region collaborated on a request to the USEPA Region 9 to downgrade the attainment status of the region from "moderate" to "severe non-attainment," thereby increasing the opportunity to receive federal grants to improve the air quality conditions in the San Joaquin Valley.

Water

Both water supply and water quality remain very significant issues in the Inland Central California Region. Groundwater resource overdrafts, salinity encroachment inland, and institutional and regulatory requirements are some of the specific issues stated to face policymakers and resource managers in this region. Addressing these issues requires unique institutional and engineering solutions which are becoming increasingly complex, due in part to the existence of separate and fragmented water districts. An indication of the complexity of water issues is the recent observation that the Stockton Water District is currently involved in five lawsuits.

Interviewees express concerns that water purveyors will purchase agricultural water resources from the San Joaquin Valley. They observe that the groundwater recharge areas at the north and east end of San Joaquin county have turned into a battle of control over groundwater resources and the urban areas are able to out-compete agricultural areas in bidding for these resources. There is also concern that the subdivision of rural properties will have significant impact on local water tables, and will generate more pressure to sell water supplies to Southern California.

While many people speak of the central nature of water as an issue in the Inland Central California Region and the need to work cooperatively on water issues, there are few instances of collaborative planning across regions and little history of cross-regional collaboration among water districts. Most interviewees portray water as overwhelming in its complexity and its political dynamics. There is a perception that the San Joaquin Valley "water world" is divided between Westside, Eastside, and Upper River users. Multiple interviewees described the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 5) as autonomous and managing large areas with little to no public oversight. Growers are portrayed as somewhat resistant to participation in watershed coalition groups and local water quality management efforts, principally due to the open-ended costs of water quality monitoring that must now be borne by the growers.

Land Use

The issue of land use permeates discussions of economic development, transportation systems, preservation of agricultural land, affordable housing, and habitat restoration. Many interviewees note a lack of quality review of local land use plans at the state level, few incentives for good community and county planning, and many more disincentives for good planning, especially fiscal disincentives. Another land use issue is the comparative ease of increasing subdivisions, and hence sprawl, in contrast to the more difficult planning decisions around higher density housing within city limits. In general, interviewees feel local land use planning does not necessarily consider the ramifications of local decisions on land use regionally. As one respondent put it, "the holy grail of local government is land use control."

Areas of frustration are (1) the perceived contradiction between state and local requirements around addressing land use planning in General Plans—mandatory at the state level, but not locally; and (2) the view that putting a monetary value on land use has led to a commoditization of land, particularly for housing and agriculture. Both of these actions act as further disincentives for collaborative planning.

Agriculture

There is uniform concern about the lack of a strategy for preserving the best agricultural land in the San Joaquin Valley and for the lack of coordination around this issue. In regard to collaborative planning, many respondents fear that the bigger land use picture, including agricultural land preservation, does not get addressed in many collaborative efforts which work at a more local, grassroots level. Interviewees expressed that the current pattern of urban development reflects a reactive stance, and rural communities within the San Joaquin Valley will continue to sprawl and spill into agricultural land without better proactive planning, resources, and long-term vision. For example, more county and rural land is zoned for retail usage because of the desire to generate sales tax revenue; however, this is not considered long-term vision, and is often done on a case by case basis. As one interviewee observed, "There will be a bar next to a church, next to a house, etc."

People are concerned that farmland is viewed as viable land in a "holding pattern" waiting for "real development," instead of as the backbone of the agricultural industry. The "fiscalization of land use" has led to competition for sales and property tax revenues, and compelled jurisdictions to compete with one another. At the same time, there is also concern by some that the Inland Central California Region has placed all of its future hopes on the agricultural sector, and the San Joaquin Valley needs to think in terms beyond agriculture. However, a competing view suggests that in the long run, it is better to rely on agriculture because, while it does not provide the same level of tax revenues, it requires virtually no resources from local jurisdictions to sustain it.

Many interviewees see the agricultural landscape is shifting, a result of environmental concerns about retiring land, water transfers, and marginal soils. There is concern that California will lose its dairy industry because of land use conflicts emerging around population growth, animal rights, use of chemicals, shipping, and animal waste management. Of interest is the effect of a recent Right to Farm Ordinance, which will require new homeowners to receive disclosure of the impacts of purchasing a home in an agricultural area.

Respondents strongly suggest that conversations should be taking place between agriculture, community development, and environmentalists directly around land use policies; however, many question who could facilitate such a conversation in such a way as to bridge long-standing issues of resentment and mistrust between these sectors.

Economic viability issues of keeping ranchers and farmers in business intersected with land use concerns. "Getting agriculture to the table" was portrayed as clashing with the independent agricultural culture.

Growth

Public debate around land use often converges around the "growth"/"no growth" polarity. Respondents report an increase in groups meeting to work through this dichotomy, which some describe as being the ultimate source of pressure in other sectors, such as transportation, economic development, and housing.

For several respondents who live in Southern Sierra counties, environmental and no-growth supporters within the community have moved into positions of leadership or are now serving as planning agency representatives. In one instance, interviewees perceived lack of appreciation for economic development on the part of such planning agency representatives when their decisions stalled a modular home development and other affordable housing options, new local business initiatives, and forest clearing activities.

Concerns about growth are also framed in terms of "lack of open space," the "march of subdivisions" into forest land and the foothills, impaired wildlife corridors, and unacceptable water quality impacts occurring in local watersheds.

There is also significant concern that there is no real infrastructure planning, particularly in terms of transportation and housing, to prepare for the anticipated population growth.

Transportation

The time is past for "building roads for the sake of roads," according to some respondents. It is now critical, these respondents indicated, also to think of land use and the environment.

The "archaic" Highway 99 system is a focal point for many transportation discussions. Alternatives under discussion include the development of high speed rail and using local airports as hubs. High speed rail, in particular, raises concerns due to a lack of collaboration on the issues. Negative feelings toward the high speed rail concept are based on the fact that each jurisdiction or community responded independently to the high speed rail task force exploring rail usage. People express there is no regional entity framing the issue, such as a multi-county COG.

The commercial and general aviation system is recognized as playing an integral role in moving goods and people in California, but its development is stymied by incompatible land uses, noise complaints, and reductions in airport services and activities. Aviation issues are not only about transportation, but also reflect housing pressures, environmental justice concerns, and economic development needs.

Maintaining highways with minimal funds is also expressed as a challenge. One respondent cited a $200 million shortfall in transportation dollars to maintain the nearly 3,000 miles of roads in Kern County alone.

Improved rail access—both for delivering goods, and for moving people—is cited as a priority. The expansion of Amtrak services, including increasing the frequency of San Joaquin trains and motor coaches, is seen as one viable alternative for increasing tourism to destinations such as Yosemite and Sequoia National Park.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing advocates recognize the challenge of being part of the building industry and trying to work with the Building Industry Association, California Chambers of Commerce, and real estate professionals when there are often competing visions of what constitutes smart growth. Respondents express that affordable housing needs include diverse mixes of housing, multifamily housing, and higher density housing, as well as greater attention to the issue of transient farm worker housing.

Respondents indicate that affordable housing issues are not easy. The funding issues referred to earlier around the fiscalization of land use compromise the ability of county and city planners and nonprofit housing groups to work together effectively. Affordable housing also includes fairness and equity issues connected to the "not-in-my-backyard" mentality.

Jobs/Housing Balance

The state's lack of funding around jobs/housing balance is viewed as dampening incentives for studying good models for achieving a jobs/housing balance. State funding would encourage collaborative planning around real growth opportunities. The widely held view is that workers in the San Joaquin Valley must have jobs in the area so that workers are not forced to travel out of the region.

The "unending migration" of people from the Bay Area was expressed by interviewees as another aspect of the imbalance between jobs and housing. As one respondent said, "when Stanislaus and Merced counties are advertised as bedroom communities to the East Bay, you know we're in for trouble." Respondents also cite several instances of collaborative efforts around reducing the job/housing imbalance. Transportation collaboration networks are cited, particularly efforts involving San Joaquin County and East Bay counties.

Education

Especially as related to workforce development, the low rate of the area population going to college is of great concern to university, college and county administrators. Concerns about workforce education levels are linked to economic development issues: according to one respondent, in parts of Tulare County much of the labor force is described as uneducated and unskilled, with around 65% of the working population possessing a high school diploma or less. On the other hand, there is concern that there are too few jobs in the San Joaquin Valley that demand more than a high school diploma.

There is also concern about the lack of graduate study opportunities in the San Joaquin Valley. One respondent indicated that students who are forced to leave the San Joaquin Valley to complete graduate study rarely return to share the skills that were learned elsewhere.

Education is also spoken of in terms of the need for education of policymakers and the public regarding transportation infrastructure, environmental enhancements, and economic development. Efforts in community education are desired in the areas of leadership training and small business development programs led in conjunction with local colleges and universities.

Economic Development

Small businesses are viewed as very important for the Inland Central California Region – and as having many challenges. The requirements of being bonded, carrying significant insurance, and having access to capital makes operating small businesses and doing business with government entities "almost impossible," according to one respondent. Respondents expressed concerns that small businesses will rarely participate as part of the economic development engine of the San Joaquin Valley because they cannot meet several key conditions such as access to capital. Respondents observed that the counties, federal and state government are structured to do business with only large, traditional businesses that can prepare work proposals, maintain insurance and bonding, pay workers' compensation, and get on vendor lists.

Environmental Protection

There is a feeling that there is little coordination at the state level regarding habitat conservation. Respondents indicate habitat connectivity issues will become more prominent unless growth is better managed, and if not properly coordinated, the Inland Central California Region could resemble the Los Angeles basin. One stated challenge with collaboration on environmental protection issues is the number of agencies that are often needed to address any situation.

In regard to collaborative planning, one respondent in the habitat restoration area feels that people only plan jointly when normal processes break down, for example during Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hydroelectric relicensing processes.

Collaboration with environmentalists is described as sometimes fruitful, and often not. Environmentalists are portrayed as often opposing affordable housing efforts because of habitat and traffic implications; the challenge expressed by the affordable housing perspective is to help environmentalists see that affordable housing equals smart growth. People expressing an environmental perspective are perceived as coming from outside the Inland Central California Region; as "outsiders," their understanding of local issues is often limited and their opinions are viewed with suspicion.

Poverty and Health

The poverty rate is approximately 21% in San Joaquin County, and exists in cycles of intensity, according to one respondent. The challenge for collaborative planning is that the issue is long term and complicated. Along with poverty, the record-high rates of asthma, diabetes and heart disease need addressing.

The growing gap between the wealthy and the poor is cited as a major issue elsewhere in the Inland Central California Region too. For example, one respondent in the Fresno area referred to this gap as affecting social issues, employment and housing.

How do people talk about these issues?

Regardless of the issue area in which someone works, people see the interconnections among the issues. For example, a conversation with someone from the housing arena led into discussion of economic diversity and then into educational opportunities. Planners talk about air, water, transportation, and housing issues. Air quality managers have to factor in fire control, agricultural waste particles, and traffic patterns. Educators and employment training representatives talk about the effects of the Valley's agricultural base on the need for services, as well as the effects of the presence of higher education institutions on regional housing needs.

What are the tensions within and between the issues?

While interviewees readily describe connections among these issues, they also readily identify tensions. Some interviewees framed tensions compromising collaborative efforts in key areas. For example, interviewees referred to workers versus producers in agriculture, the competing desire to both limit growth and accomplish housing affordability, and the challenge of accomplishing both housing affordability and environmental "friendliness."

What are the information needs to support collaborative planning?

Interviewees identify information needs that are tied to quality and integration, not quantity. Few interviewees identify a need for more data to support collaborative planning. People describe a need for information that is trustworthy, complete, and unbiased. Several interviewees also describe a need for a trusted source to sort through, integrate, assess the quality of, and identify gaps in the available data.

Interviewees were asked about their current sources for information on issues of importance in the Inland Central California Region. Their responses range from official reports from state agencies, non-profit organizations, and universities, to newspaper articles and numerous websites.

Sources of Reliable Information

University research, such as reports produced by the University of California at Davis, California State University Sacramento, California State University Fresno's Central California Futures Institute, California State University Fresno's Central Valley Health Policy Institute, and California State University Stanislaus' Center for Public Policy Studies, is perceived as more objective and freer of the bias associated with reports from state agencies in development, agriculture, and the environment in particular.

There are mixed feelings about many other sources of information. Great Valley Center reports are credited as being very useful, although one respondent questioned their reliability and felt that like most other agencies, their views were not "untainted". The possibility of biased research from a variety of agency sources was mentioned frequently by respondents; some called for a wider acknowledgement of the breadth of opinion on any particular subject to become part of collaborative process. The California Bay Delta Authority's practice of having scientific studies looked at independently as part of a collaborative process is cited as useful.

In cases where too much information was perceived, the challenge frequently presented was distilling key components through an open process. Respondents also are concerned about access. People want to make sure reports are available, preferably through a "one-stop" information clearinghouse.

Geographic Information System (GIS) surveys are important to people in understanding and problem-solving on issues of the region. A number of counties express interest in producing county-wide GIS mapping studies.

The Internet was also mentioned as an "excellent" source of information with numerous helpful websites cited, although it was recognized that not everyone has equal access to the Internet. A sampling of websites mentioned include: National Low Income Housing Coalition; Small Business Association; California Secretary of State's Office; local universities; California Departments of Finance and Housing; US Census Bureau; Fannie

Mae Foundation; and the California Rural Housing website listing of "Best Practices in the Central Valley."

Information from the Sierra Business Council is mentioned as useful by Southern Sierra interviewees. Overall, information for rural and foothills counties was characterized as "fractured." However, the Southern Sierra is also viewed by some as being "ahead of the game" as a result of having one of the best GIS systems in the state.

Keeping reports current is viewed as crucial. For example, interviewees referred to 2003 update of the California State Environmental Goals and Policy Report, the Governor's growth and land use policy, updated for the first time in 20 years.

Less Reliable or Difficult to Obtain Sources of Information

From the environmental sector in particular - both on the agency level and with environmental groups - distrust emerged around perceived gaps in data on water and air quality. Other gaps mentioned were in specific areas of science, such as water temperature, water quality, and habitat needs.

While many interviewees feel reasonably good information exists in general, there are concerns that:

- Data on factors driving the economy are not connected to economic forecasts.
- "Real time" information about what housing is being produced is not readily available, and people are "making guesses" about housing needs.
- Independent verification of results is difficult to find. Public modeling needs to be grounded in a locally-based and transparent process.
- Data on a region-by-region basis for comparative purposes is difficult to come by, making cross-regional statistical analyses difficult. The suggestion was made to develop an area clearinghouse for the purpose of collecting such data.

Relationships

Who are the people involved in collaboration and collaborative planning?

The people involved in collaboration and collaborative planning represent a full spectrum of issues and organizational affiliations, an indicator of strong collaborative planning. There are members of the faith community involved in housing issues and members of the agricultural community engaged in transportation issues. The involvement in collaboration stretches the full length of this 12-county area and from east to west.

There are concerns, however, about particular relationships among the stakeholder groups since some relationships are perceived as doing well and other relationships are perceived as quite tricky. Respondents characterize some potential participants as

"staying away" from collaborative discussions in the face of particular issues; for example, "if the issue is concerning land use, real estate and building construction parties are not interested." Or, when the issues at hand involve water, farmers and ranchers may be resistant according to some respondents. Those who are in a position to reassure participants in a collaborative process are "business people and educators." The private sector and higher education representatives are perceived to bring "common sense" to the process along with greater objectivity.

Specific examples to illustrate the range of relationships follow:

- There is a sense of camaraderie in San Joaquin County among the business community, local elected officials, and service agencies.
- Service clubs, such as the Rotary Club, are important in Merced and Stanislaus counties, serving as the centers for collaborative networks across sectors.
- In Fresno, the failing sales tax initiative is attributed to a level of mistrust between stakeholders such as the Sierra Club, the League of Women Voters, the City of Fresno, the Fresno COG, and the Chamber of Commerce due to perceptions of broken promises and misrepresentations stemming from the failure of a prior tax measure to live up to expectations.
- There seems to be some degree of mutual distrust between people working from water districts, affordable housing agencies, or cities, and environmentalists because of the perceived devotion of the latter group to one particular aspect of species preservation, and their tendency to go to court to work out differences.
- "Growth" and "no growth" advocates are at odds in several counties, and each group consists of subgroups of real estate, agriculture, and builders on one side, and environmentalists on the other. There are groups that are trying to change the dialogue to one of more mutual interests in jobs, improved transportation, and moving the debate beyond polarization.

Who is seen as excluded from the network?

There is significant concern about the people not included in collaborative planning. Sometimes these concerns are that an agency with oversight on an issue does not appear to be an active player. Sometimes these concerns are that a group that recently immigrated lacks the political power or cultural familiarity to engage. There are various attempts to bridge these gaps. There is also concern that while some groups may be represented, representation is not in proportion to their numbers or influence. Latino or Hmong groups may participate, but be relatively quiet in discussions, according to one respondent.

Interviewees expressed that they are concerned the following entities or individuals are not fully represented in collaborative planning efforts in this area:

- The California Department of Food and Agriculture should be represented because it is involved in creating a state plan for agriculture.

- The agricultural industry should play a bigger role because they get huge benefits as a result of farm worker housing - rents are subsidized and farmers pay lower wages.
- Farmers in the southern San Joaquin Valley are often left out because they are not well organized.
- The business community is sometimes left out by omission, sometimes by choice. They can represent the consumer voice.
- Environmentalists are often overlooked because they are seen as outsiders and "obstacles" to collaborative process.
- County supervisors make many decisions, but do not always seem engaged.
- Faith-based communities are often not included but could be helpful, especially around issues of poverty and affordable housing. They could help lenders go beyond usual means of marketing by educating potential homebuyers in their congregations.
- Poor people, new immigrants, and minority groups are often not involved, although these people are often the most impacted. They are often perceived as poorly represented by "extremists" who use litigation as their only tool.
- People in need of affordable housing themselves are often not included. There are organizations advocating for them, but the collaborations need to involve more "actual people" experiencing the problem.
- Higher education and the healthcare industries are often left out of planning, despite being part of planning initiatives such as Bakersfield's Vision 2020 Project.
- Labor groups such as the United Farm Workers are frequently left out.
- The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce reportedly often leaves itself out, following its own agenda as a group outside of mainstream politics.
- The public is left out. As one respondent said, "We must keep them informed; they must get involved."
- Major industry sectors such as prisons and large distribution centers need to be more involved.

What is the interaction between the issue to be discussed and the people with whom to work?

The perceived pertinent set of partners for collaboration shifts with the different issues. For example, several interviewees mentioned the need to include higher education representatives in conversations about economic development. Air quality representatives from the foothill counties found a need to work across county boundaries on air quality issues. If an issue involves a watershed, interviewees stated, they may work across multiple political boundaries.

How do relationships work across levels of agencies (local, state, tribal, and federal)?

Interviewees identify some variation in how well relationships work across the governmental layers of federal, tribal, state, and local. Some people maintain that local collaboration works the best. The relationship with local government and the

federal government is next most effective. Tribal governments and the nearby local governments have much interaction and, at times, significant conflict. Worst, in the perspective of several interviewees, is the relationship between state government and local government because of regulations and long delays in project approvals.

The image of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is mixed. Some people are concerned that Caltrans wields such a strong presence that collaboration with the department is difficult. For example, one interviewee stated, "we go to meetings with Caltrans, and we're always outnumbered by their representatives, no matter how many people we bring." Other interviewees cited helpful participation of Caltrans on projects.

There is a desire to include the state at the table as a partner and caution about the state dictating conditions. Interviewees identify a mixture of a collaborative approach and a command and control approach from state agencies in particular. A number of interviewees expressed frustration and concern that there may be significant variety in the degree to which representatives of a single state agency are collaborative. There is also a desire to look to the state agencies to track the bigger picture in these issues and to set a tone for collaboration.

To what degree are there champions for collaboration?

The champions for collaboration are distributed throughout this area, the issues, and the types of organizations. Some champions are organizational, such as the Great Valley Center, and some champions feel a personal and individual calling to a collaborative approach. Some of the champions are elected officials; many come from agencies, the non-profit sector and the private sector. These champions often have some experience with collaboration and are willing to invest substantial time as long as a collaborative effort is oriented to outcomes.

Many of the champions are quite visible in their support for collaborative planning and in their points of view on the various issues. Approximately one third of the references to champions of collaborative efforts were repeated by two or more interviewees. However, there are also mixed feelings about the capacity of these champions to convene or facilitate dialogue since they are often seen as having agendas beyond their support for collaborative planning.

How do the relationships shift in different sub-areas?

There is a direct relationship between moving southward in the Inland Central California Region and rising distrust of state and federal government. Local involvement in shaping the process and owning the results is vital.

Typically, the Southern Sierra counties and San Joaquin Valley counties work fairly independently of each other and without substantial rancor. The Foothill counties and San Joaquin Valley counties do not typically work as collaborators on issues because

they see themselves dealing with different geographic, environmental, and social dynamics. This independence is not portrayed, however, as based on rancor between these counties.

Several sub-areas emerge as representing ripeness for further collaboration. Tulare, Kings and Kern counties perceive themselves as having commonalities in the growth pressures from the Los Angeles basin and shared industry bases. With urban growth on the boundary between them, Fresno and Madera counties already have efforts underway to address issues collaboratively. Merced, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin counties have some substantial collaborative efforts within their boundaries and face some similar challenges from the San Francisco Bay Area. Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne and Mariposa counties have similar environmental challenges and growth patterns and, thus, represent a sub-area.

Process

How refined are the knowledge and experience about the process of collaborative planning?

Some elements of good collaboration emerge repeatedly in conversations with interviewees. Successful partnerships around cross-regional planning are characterized in terms of the climate in which planning occurs, the composition of planning efforts, and interpersonal dynamics between parties.

Some elements commonly cited are:

- Common goals
- Leaders (not delegates) at the table
- Participants need to be "statespeople" and look at the big picture
- Equal decision-making footing for all participants
- Willingness to compromise
- No hidden agendas

These characteristics indicate a strong understanding of collaboration.

Key to the collaborative planning which yields positive and long term results is solid leadership at the state and federal levels, according to respondents. State elected officials are in a natural position to exert leadership, and the "upper levels" of government can build in rewards and incentives for collaboration, as well as serve in a coordinating role. The state can mandate collaboration, an action many felt was a necessary approach, citing the success of mandated collaboration around air quality improvement. In the words of one respondent, "folks can't walk away when the going gets tough".

In the perspective of respondents, the state is only one component of partnerships. It was equally critical that partnerships are legitimized by local institutional structures, at the county, city, and other local jurisdictional levels.

While respondents feel that larger counties definitely have certain population and resource advantages, smaller counties have the incentive of urgency, because of their relative lack of resources, to work collaboratively. As a respondent from Merced put it, "our county is the 'right size'—big enough so that we can do things, small enough so that if we don't collaborate, we're sunk". Similarly, certain industries are more dependent upon collaborative planning because of their funding patterns, such as the affordable housing community where parties are heavily dependent on subsidies.

Views of the process of collaborative planning suggest widespread knowledge, experience, and valuing of the general characteristics of solid, consensual program development. These views included:

Collaboration Climate

- An emphasis on getting buy-in up-front, or as one participant put it, "knowing what the answer is before starting the process".
- The format must be neutral and transparent, so that participants do not sense a manipulated process.
- Parties all have to have something to lose if cooperation is not achieved, and thus must be willing to give up something of value. At the same time, there was feeling among some that "deals" have to be made, and honored.
- People coming to the table must be willing to suspend preconceptions, turf issues, and prejudices about other parties.
- Participants should work toward a common agenda, with limited, yet clear goals, and stay focused as much as possible. At the same time, agendas should not be "single-minded," but rather goal-oriented.
- Participants should arrive with a willingness to "think outside the box".
- The process of collaboration should be thought through from the beginning in terms of weighing the merits of the idea, developing rules of decision-making, deciding what should be achieved, who should be involved, and how often meetings should be held, and considering potential results and ramifications through a consensus approach where everyone is allowed to object.
- Parties must be willing to negotiate and make compromises.
- Participants need to talk about what can be done together, and start with small issues that have chance of success through partnerships, rather than difficult issues like tax-sharing agreements.
- Progress should be reported frequently to stakeholders and public.
- Participants need to find the vision to transition to something new.
- State agencies should present issues, particularly around land use, more neutrally to local governments, rather than the "got a good deal on a prison site" mentality.
- A good collaboration must have passion, purpose, and be fun and messy. In general it is okay to disagree.

- Long term commitment is demonstrated by collaborative efforts that promote 10-20 year visions and take into account the record of past efforts that did or did not work.
- Education is an important part of the process of collaborative partnerships.
- Patience is critical--the issues, the people, and the relationships all need time. Look at a 3-5 year time frame for collaborative planning efforts; first year is just building relationships.

Composition of Collaboratives

Views on who should be involved in collaborative planning strongly suggested beliefs in an inclusionary, nonjudgmental, and creative process. Views on the composition of collaboratives include the following:

- Stakeholder involvement is slow, but it is critical to success in achieving consensus. Many stressed having the "right mix" of people involved, which included those who could potentially "sink" collaborative planning, and having all feel a sense of ownership. Also, recognition and support from "higher-ups" are viewed as helpful.
- Everyone involved should be there from beginning; it is difficult having different representatives at meetings every time. It is also self-defeating to have people thinking they were invited only as an "afterthought". Establishing broad representation at the beginning is critical to success at end.
- There should be equal participation; the process should be open to public at a level where everyone can participate. There should not be a gap between decision-makers and the people affected.
- Anyone with influence in the overall economic fabric, along with visionaries and "big thinkers," should be included.
- The agricultural sector needs to "step up to the plate"; there is a tendency in the agriculture community to penalize anyone who steps forward against conventional wisdom.
- Tight collaborative networks often exist around important local sectors; these networks can provide basis for future collaborative efforts that can foresee problems before they arise.
- Nontraditional partners, going beyond traditional public agencies are important for successful collaborative planning, e.g., private sector, citizen stakeholders, community based organizations, youth and seniors, and people of color.
- Strong private sector leadership is important, along with bringing in expertise to facilitate discussions, and inviting fewer "fixed agenda" participants.
- It is important to work together on collaborative planning without political agendas before "politicos and grandstanders" can take over the process.

Interpersonal Dynamics

The following are cited as qualities of relationships that nurture productive collaborative planning:

- Trust, spending time together, and building relationships are critical. At the same time, there should be no hidden agendas. This building of trust becomes difficult when there are key people, at any level, who have a reputation as "personality problems".
- The leader/facilitator should be a neutral party.
- Communication—listening and hearing, especially around divisive issues, are important. Collaboration cannot be used as a "buzzword" without parties understanding the necessity of really listening.
- Participants need to put aside egos and look unselfishly at issues. As one participant put it, the challenge is "ego-system management".
- Transparency—everything should be laid out on the table.

Not surprisingly, the lack of these same attributes is viewed as inhibiting collaborative planning and planning processes in general.

What is the tolerance for process?

Many interviewees identified the need for patience, time, outcomes, and financial resources to engage in collaborative planning. With these attributes, interviewees indicated a high tolerance for a collaborative process. When these attributes are absent, interviewees indicated, the tolerance for collaborative process is stretched thin. Interviewees identified champions experienced in other collaborative processes as the most effective voices to encourage patience.

Multiple people spoke of a need for effective process to support collaboration including well-defined criteria for success, clear decision-making rules, explicit ground rules, and neutral facilitators to serve as guides. These criteria identified for a successful collaboration indicate an appreciation, more than just tolerance, for process as long as it is tied to outcomes.

To what degree do people see that they have better alternatives to collaboration? To what degree is there incentive/disincentive to participate?

Many people identified a need for an external threat, legal or regulatory, to give the best impetus for collaborative planning in the 12-county area. There is a feeling that the incentives to participate and overcome the historical separation among these entities will not be strong enough until an external threat occurs. People are also concerned that the opportunities for effective solutions to transportation, land use, and air quality issues are diminishing quickly so that there may not be many choices for solutions when everyone is finally ready to collaborate.

Is there enough time to allow for exploration of issues and complex negotiation coupled with adequate sense of urgency?

There is a widely shared sense that there is a current window that provides for adequate timeline and the sense of urgency to work on these issues. Many interviewees spoke of potential impacts of land use, transportation infrastructure, housing, economic development and higher education issues on future generations. There is also a shared sense that this window of opportunity may be brief as the pressures mount for quick decisions.

To what degree are there convenors appropriate for next steps?

There are multiple potential convening entities championing collaboration within the area. Examples include the Great Valley Center, the Sierra Business Council, Yosemite National Park, and the California Central Valley Economic Development Corporation. Interviewees have varying degrees of comfort with these convening organizations. For example, interviewees suggested that the influence, credibility, and understanding of any of these organizations diminish relative to the distance from its home base.

Because there is a perceived bias among stakeholder entities, including champions, facilitation that is and is perceived to be unbiased is scarce among entities in the region. In addition, no single convening organization emerges for the Inland Central California Region. However, since the major emerging focuses for collaboration are sub-areas of 2 to 4 counties, there is a beneficial match between potential convenors and potential participants.

To what degree are there resources to support collaboration?

Collaboration is frequently described as an add-on task for organizations already stretched thin in terms of demand. A number of people expressed an affinity for greater collaboration and a frustration that the reality of diminished budgets and personnel coupled with increased demands makes collaboration very difficult.

Barriers, Opportunities, and Ripeness

What are the barriers to collaborative planning across substance, process, and relationships?

Substantive, procedural, structural, and relationship barriers to greater regional collaboration were identified. Some frequently mentioned barriers were the substance of regulations and tricky multi-layered issues, process concerns such as appropriate decision-makers not present at the table, and relationship concerns such as historical distrust among stakeholders. An observation from a respondent about what prevented collaborative planning from occurring more frequently is simply the "infant" state of the

process. Other respondents mentioned the lack of a history of collaborative efforts across political boundaries.

Political boundaries are the biggest boundary issue – not separation of issues or organizations. Interviewees often mentioned the challenges of no regional political entity to convene and conduct collaboration and no state agency with collaboration as its central mission.

Examples of barriers such as prevalent attitudes, a lack of leadership, a lack of structural support, poor process, political considerations, and economic dynamics are listed below:

Prevalent Attitudes

- Trust—and mistrust, particularly of government at all levels is seen as a substantial barrier to collaboration. The expression used by one respondent is "local money is clean, state money has strings, but federal money has so many strings it's dirty".
- Getting discouraged and walking away from a collaborative effort are seen as common barriers. The flip side of discouragement is the need for "political will," the optimistic belief that systems can be changed so that people can work together collaboratively. Lack of will is also evident in the "hard and frustrating" work of getting low income clients involved in affordable housing efforts.
- Another barrier to successful collaboration is expressed as refusing to listen to the other side of issues and sticking to the side that best suits one's values. There is the feeling that people must move from "position-based" to "interest-based" styles in order to plan cross-regionally.
- More barriers expressed are the dominant political and cultural attitudes in the San Joaquin Valley, conservative "ideologies" which over-value independence and "going it alone". Along with that, respondents note a lack of a common San Joaquin Valley identity. These attitudes were also described as "parochial".
- Respondents often note the fear of losing power and local control when a shared process is attempted. Along with this fear comes a refusal to give up anything and avoidance of negotiation.
- A lack of a sense of urgency or vision was cited as a barrier. Many cited collaboration occurring only "when things get really bad". Other interviewees referred to collaboration occurring only when people were forced to collaborate by lawsuits or regulations.
- Urban and rural tensions were listed as barriers to collaboration. Examples cited are within Fresno, Kern, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin counties. The perception is that the growing urban population does not understand or value agriculture, farming, and rural issues in general. Solutions for urban areas are often seen as being "crammed down the throats" of rural jurisdictions.

Lack of Leadership

- The state is seen as not exhibiting leadership in terms of setting up collaboration goals, defining supportive infrastructure and process, and convening local parties. The federal level is seen, at times, as usurping local group effort instead of trying to encourage collaboration and share information.
- The state is perceived as disorganized. According to one respondent, the state "doesn't know where we're going and is driven by the stock market and funding through income tax and competing special interests". The state is also seen as sending conflicting messages - build new housing, but plow up agricultural land instead of building in cities - and discouraging collaboration by focusing on single issues, rather than collaboration across the issues.

Lack of Structural Support

- In the perspective of many respondents, too many agencies have overlapping missions on the same issue. State agencies are perceived as failing to talk to each other.
- According to some interviewees, there is a need for streamlining of permitting processes. This desire for streamlined permitting extends to both state and federal environmental processes.
- Respondents sense a lack of an appropriate agency to look at the big picture of land use. They feel that an issue that should have a regional perspective ends up relegated to the local level.
- Fiscal structural dysfunction is viewed as leading to short-term thinking. Increased emphasis on retail sales tax revenue leads local jurisdictions to "sell themselves" to increase sales tax revenues base.
- County, city, and other borders are seen to compound the difficulty of working across commonalities. In cases where metropolitan areas exist within county lines, collaboration around jobs, housing, and transportation issues is easier. Also, hydrological and atmospheric boundaries do not match political boundaries. In the Southern Sierra, respondents note there could easily be watershed line boundaries.
- There is no mechanism in place for residents of the 12 counties collectively to vote or generate revenue on issues that affect them as a region.
- Some interviewees see the lack of multi-county COGs as a barrier to collaboration. For these interviewees, multi-county COGs would provide a greater forum for collaborative planning. Internal county structure also disfavors collaborative effort, favoring political alliances instead.

Poor Process

- There is a lack of perceived results, resulting in apathy. Good will toward collaboration can be exhausted when it is viewed as never going beyond "putting up sticky notes, blue and red dots" at meetings, in the words of one interviewee.

Political Considerations

- According to some interviewees, elected officials tend to see their constituencies as islands; there were few political incentives for planning collaboratively across districts. On the other hand, respondents acknowledge that local politicians are required by the system to act provincially.
- The interest of county supervisors representing unincorporated areas is seen as very different than the interest of elected officials representing cities. According to one interviewee, supervisors keep approving urban kinds of development of the rural and unincorporated areas because they "just can't say no to land owners". Consequently, development is approved, but not the supporting infrastructure for the development.

Economic Dynamics

- The Inland Central California Region is perceived by many interviewees to be attempting to make a transition from an agricultural and oil-dominated economy to something new at the same time it is experiencing huge growth pressures. This transition is seen as a monstrous economic shift.
- Agriculture cannot remain the most dominant industry if real economic development is to happen, according to some agencies working with low income people. Agricultural interests are seen as providing minimum wage work opportunities and high unemployment.

A lack of financial resources at a state agency level and for this particular region are cited as a barrier to collaboration in multiple ways. Interviewees talk about how lack of funding contributes to competition among parties for funds, suspicion, and distrust in motives of potential partners. They also discuss how the scarcity of funds can mean public safety issues often get more attention than other important concerns such as economic development and affordable housing. There is also a shared fear that larger markets, such as the San Francisco Bay Area and the Los Angeles metropolitan area, absorb such a massive proportion of available funding that this area will consistently face scarce resources.

A lack of resources makes people feel vulnerable and protective. As one respondent noted, "rather than seeing the pie, we protect our slice." The lack of financial resources also encourages cities and counties to pass over thoughtful collaboration in favor of such

possibly unwise decisions as passing general plan amendments that allow growth on the edges to generate sales tax revenue.

Interviewees frame solutions to perceived collaboration barriers along a range including more collaborative individual characteristics of the people involved, enhanced interpersonal dynamics, educational opportunities, and social change. Proposed solutions include fewer egos among partners, willingness to make more conciliatory gestures, assumptions of good intentions, leadership training for potential partners, and diversifying the economic base beyond its emphasis on agriculture.

What are the opportunities for collaborative planning across substance, process, and relationships?

Despite the barriers, interviewees identify multiple opportunities for collaboration across a range of relationships, issues, and experiences. Some frequently mentioned opportunities are the willingness of individuals to take risks, momentum from positive experiences with collaborative planning, a shared sense of possibilities lost if collaboration does not occur, and strong local ownership. There is also a shared awareness that the land use, economic development, housing, and transportation infrastructure choices facing this area will have long-term impact, an awareness that demonstrates an opportunity for collaboration.

Several interviewees also expressed an opportunity resulting from the fatigue of competing against each other for scarce resources. These people see opportunity for synergy and success in funding as a result of working together. At times, fewer resources are perceived to promote a feeling of solidarity and enhance opportunities for collaboration.

Agencies that have any history of successful collaborative planning cite this history as important in assessing the climate for further efforts. There is a feeling that past success with collaboration is a strong indicator of future success. Fruitful partnerships turn initially wary participants in joint planning efforts into champions of collaborative effort.

There were many examples of positive experiences with collaborative planning. Illustrative examples described by interviewees include:

Across Political Boundaries

- The six Metropolitan Planning Organizations and two Rural Transportation Planning Agencies of the San Joaquin Valley work closely with the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District. This collaboration across political boundaries came up with four air quality plans, a common transportation model system and GIS data in the mid-1990s. By working together as a team, they

conserved funds. Driving incentives were the potential loss of significant funding and air quality deadlines.

- Irrigation Districts (IDs) have been coming together to look at solving common problems related to the San Joaquin River and the Delta water quality and supply for almost a decade. These districts include the Oakdale ID, San Joaquin ID, Modesto ID, Turlock ID, Merced ID, and the Friant Water Users Association, along with San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors.
- The Alliance is itself a collaboration between the Workforce Investment Board, Economic Development, plus the Small Business Development Corporation and Business Resource Center. Part of its success in Merced County is that the former county chief executive officer established a vision and pursued government in a nontraditional way. The Alliance would not happen if the cities and the Board of Supervisors had not agreed it was the best way to do economic development. The Alliance serves counties of Stanislaus, Merced, Tuolumne, Mariposa, which all make in-kind contributions. The Alliance also partners with Chambers of Commerce. "Chamber University" is a further collaboration through which higher education institutions and the four Chambers provide quality education forums for Chamber members.
- Amador and Calaveras counties wanted their own area for air quality non-attainment, as did Tuolumne and Mariposa counties, instead of being lumped in with the more polluted San Joaquin Valley air district. Air Pollution Control Officers from the four counties met, along with Mountain Counties Air Quality Technical advisors, Air Resources Board, San Joaquin, to ask EPA Region 9 for guidance. Letters were sent from Amador Transportation office, Board of Supervisors, and Amador APCD to congressional representatives and senators, and separate air districts were eventually approved.
- Operation Clean Air represents 14 issue sectors working on a five year plan for clean air, and is connected with higher education and the Farm Bureau. Through this effort, funding opportunities are broadened for eight counties from San Joaquin to Kern. Looking at clusters enabled people to "think big" about funding. The urgency of the air pollution issue got people moving.
- The multi-county (Merced, Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kern, and Kings) California Central Valley Economic Development Corporation pools available marketing resources to promote this portion of the Central Valley as a unified region that is supportive to new business and uses the "rising tide raises all boats" approach. By pooling their limited marketing resources, these counties send a clear and positive message to prospective businesses and industries that may wish to relocate to this region of the San Joaquin Valley.

Across Agencies

- The Fresno COMPACT is composed of business, employers, community college consortia, and schools to provide school to work project and housing for the anticipated 2,500-3,500 Hmong refugees who will be arriving from Thailand in the coming months.
- The Smoke Management Council (California Forestry, US Forest Service, Calaveras Big Trees, Yosemite, and Air Pollution Control Districts) work around with particulate matter emission issues. Federal fire management policies do not always put out naturally occurring fires, and the cumulative affect of lightning fires in Tuolumne convinced the US Forest Service and Yosemite to take action.
- The Central Valley Higher Education Consortium consists of 23 institutions focused on improving higher education opportunities and graduation rates in order to enhance the quality of life for the Central Valley.
- The Madera County Economic Development Commission consists of government agencies and private sector organizations that represent their collective interests at the state level and to prospective Madera businesses.
- The San Joaquin County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation and Open Space Plan represents strategy developed by a collaboration of local governments, state and federal agencies, environmental organizations and the private sector to balance species needs with the conversion of open space to other uses.
- The Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP): Merced County is an effort led by Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG), US Environmental Protection Agency, Caltrans, and the Federal Highway Administration and involving other local, state, and federal agencies. The project is succeeding in garnering substantive agency and community participation in MCAG's Regional Transportation Plan revision process.
- Workforce projects such as the Fresno area Regional Jobs Initiative (RJI) are succeeding in reducing unemployment in one of California's fastest-growing regions. The mission of the RJI is to develop a short- and long-term comprehensive strategy aimed at creating 25,000 to 30,000 net new jobs within five years at an average salary of $29,500. The additional jobs would create an annual economic impact of over $885 million to the Fresno region. With financial support from the state and possibly the federal government, the RJI plans slowly to expand this program and its successes to smaller cities and rural areas of Fresno County. This program could serve as a model to reduce unemployment beyond county borders.

Professional Planning-Driven Efforts

- An Arizona consultant firm is facilitating a planning process through a Housing and Community Development grant for housing in Stanislaus County. Nine cities came together as single voice to work with the Workforce Investment Board and local community groups to do strategic planning analyses to arrive at a comprehensive economic development plan. Groups had to develop criteria for moving from big to small business decisions, develop marketing strategies, and decide how to present the community for potential investors ("The Stanislaus River Valley"). The goal is to create a solid investment base for future development decisions.
- Madera County, along with Fannie Mae and the Great Valley Center, has hired consultants to facilitate and evaluate the social consequences of an influx of low income Hispanic residents to downtown neighborhoods of "old time" Madera residents. A community team approach was used to plot strategy to get greater interaction among different ethnic groups. After the first, "brutal" assessment, the consultant firm has been rehired to lead community to the next step.

Across Issues

- Wine grape growers in Lodi and Woodbridge work with environmental groups and growers to protect and sustain the industry, and develop manuals for growers to be certified.
- In collaborative projects along the Tuolumne River, growers and environmental groups identify land along the river that can be retired. The owner is paid a modest sum of money, and there are more opportunities for habitat restoration and floodplain management. As a consequence, conservation and environment protection pressure is relieved upstream.
- A strong coalition of mayors of smaller communities in Fresno County formed around water, economic development, and unemployment issues.

Community-Based

- Stockton's redevelopment of downtown was driven by an alignment of the community leaders and business interests. The former and current mayors established redevelopment as a priority for the City, and brought the necessary resources together. One respondent commented that "this is easier when it is just one community".
- "Experience Yosemite" is composed of business leaders, citizens, community leaders, etc. from the Yosemite area communities from Eastern and Western Sierra counties, and who meet monthly. Through their Gateway Community Partners program, city supervisors and civic leaders are invited to share controversial issues, and talk about what they can do together. Partners include

Yosemite National Park representatives, Yosemite Fund, and the Sierra Business Council.

- Tribes have been instrumental in proposing creative solutions to dealing with issues of highway construction in areas containing Native American artifacts by establishing a collaborative environment and helping to break through the existing impasse among the parties. The philosophy of one tribe, for example, is "everything before anything". Tribes also set up community meetings to educate the public to understand that projects between the tribe and local governmental institutions are actually government-to-government relationships.

Is the situation ripe for collaborative planning? If so, why? If not, why not?

In assessing whether a situation is ripe for collaborative planning, we examine criteria such as:

- To what degree are the key parties adequately represented and willing to participate in collaborative planning.
- Whether there is significant opportunity for agreement on one or more key issues.
- Whether there are sufficient resources to support a collaborative effort.
- To what degree the key parties have adequate incentive to participate, e.g. whether their best alternatives to a collaborative process are less attractive than collaborating.

A "no" answer does not necessarily mean that a collaborative process would be inadvisable. All of these factors are considered as an integrated whole.

Based on the breadth of willing participants, shared sense of urgency, awareness of negative consequences if collaboration does not occur, and opportunity for agreements that serve local, state, tribal, and federal interests, we recommend that collaborative planning efforts move forward for this area.

Due to the barriers of limited resources, the history of distrust among some stakeholders, complex issues, and an absence of regional political structures, we recommend that collaborative planning efforts occur in 2- to 4-county clusters in a way that is customized to the needs of that cluster.

CONCEPTS FOR ACTION

As we note above, some characteristics of collaborative planning for the Inland Central California Region are:

- Most collaborative planning is occurring within county boundaries. There are noteworthy projects across county boundaries. Collaboration across issues and agencies is more common than collaboration across county boundaries.
- Participants have an affinity for the more local level while recognizing the need to look at issues at a broader level.
- Interviewees seek leadership regarding a collaborative tone from the state and are wary of a directive approach.
- While professional planners tend to view collaborative planning as a professional activity to be informed by other perspectives, other people tend to define collaborative planning very broadly and seek a widely inclusive process.
- There are linkages across issues, population, and geography for
    - Stanislaus, Merced, and San Joaquin counties
    - Fresno and Madera counties
    - Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa counties
    - Kern, Kings, and Tulare counties.

Due to this combination of dynamics we recommend that the next step in collaborative planning for the Inland Central California Region is the development of an initiative for county cluster collaborative planning on the scale of 2 to 4 counties grouped together.

In order to implement this county cluster collaborative planning initiative in a way that recognizes the unique history and needs of each of these clusters, we recommend that the Tri-Agency Partnership convenes a facilitated discussion with key opinion leaders across the public sector, the private sector, and community organizations for each cluster and with the participation of any potential local convening organizations. Federal, state, and tribal agency representatives would be included. The purpose of this discussion will be to explore the interest in moving forward collectively on a collaborative planning initiative, the appropriate stakeholders for involvement in that particular cluster, and the issue focus of the initiative. For example, key private sector, public sector, and community organization representatives in the San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced area may elect to build on the San Joaquin County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation and Open Space Plan efforts to plan more collaboratively on environmental and land use issues. Another cluster may elect to focus on transportation and economic development as its collaborative planning themes.

With involvement of the major stakeholders, the facilitation team will design an inclusive, transparent, highly collaborative process for each county cluster. Each cluster will then have its own facilitated collaborative planning process customized to its needs while also engaging in issues at a scope broader than the county level. Every effort will include an education component, whether for training in collaborative process or the substantive issues. Each effort will also include a component of analyzing and

addressing information sorting and prioritizing. If a cluster elects not to proceed with a larger collaborative planning effort, we recommend that the Tri-Agency Partnership proceeds with the interested county clusters and revisit in 2 to 3 years the specific cluster that declined the initiative.

The next step in fostering collaborative planning for this area will be for the county clusters to expand to handle larger issues as appropriate. A gathering of representatives from the county clusters could assist in the implementation of this next step once the initiatives are underway.

In order to proceed with these recommendations, the state will need to ask itself if the following conditions are present at the state level:

- The political will to follow through with the approach including implementation;
- Adequate support for a collaborative planning process from elected officials;
- The resources to implement fully the recommendations;
- The desire to both foster and play a role in this form of partnership;
- The tolerance for being a partner without playing the traditional command and control role; and
- The patience to honor and trust the process when dynamics are challenging.

Given this approach outlined above and based on the Assessment of Collaborative Planning, the Tri-Agency Partnership can play a vital role in supporting integrated, big picture, collaborative planning for a part of California that contains enormous vitality, includes unique resources and faces tremendous pressures.

Appendix A: Subcommittee for Collaborative Planning

Common Ground would like to thank the members of the Subcommittee for Collaborative Planning for their invaluable assistance throughout this assessment.

Cindy Adams	Chief, Environmental Management Office, Division of Environmental Analysis, Department of Transportation
Katie Benouar	Office of Regional and Interagency Planning, Division of Transportation Planning, Department of Transportation
Cathy Bleier	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Watersheds, Resources Agency
Michael Byrne	Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development
John Clickenbeard	Department of Conservation, Resources Agency
Cathy Creswell	Deputy Director, Division of Housing Policy Development, Department of Housing and Community Development
Tremain Downey	Chief, Office of Performance Measures and Data Analysis, Department of Transportation
Gregg Erickson	Chief, Biological and Technical Assistance Office, Division of Environmental Analysis, Department of Transportation
Gregory B. Greenwood	Former Science Advisor, Resources Agency
Oscar Jarquin	Chief, Office of Geographic Information System, Division of Transportation System Information, Department of Transportation
Kurt Karperos	Manager, Transportation Strategies Section, Planning and Technical Support Division, Air Resources Board
Richard Loa	Division of Housing Policy Development, Department of Housing and Community Development
Marilee Mortenson	Environmental Management Office, Division of Environmental Analysis, Department of Transportation

Denise O'Connor	Former Chief, Environmental Management Office, Division of Environmental Analysis, Department of Transportation
Sharon Scherzinger	Chief, Office of Regional and Interagency Planning, Division of Transportation Planning, Department of Transportation
Brian Smith	Deputy Director for Planning and Modal Programs, Department of Transportation
Joan Sollenberger	Chief, Division of Transportation Planning, Department of Transportation
Luree Stetson	Department of Conservation, Resources Agency
Michael Sweeney	Former Deputy Assistant Secretary, Resources Agency
Linda Wheaton	Assistant Deputy Director, Division of Housing Policy Development, Department of Housing and Community Development
Dara Wheeler	Office of Regional and Interagency Planning, Division of Transportation Planning, Department of Transportation
Gary Winters	Former Chief, Division of Environmental Analysis, Department of Transportation

Appendix B: Interview Team

Beth Greenwood	Co-Director, Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions, UC Davis Extension
Carolyn L. Penny	Co-Director, Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions, UC Davis Extension
Linda Ziegahn	Associate, Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions, UC Davis Extension
Stephanie Peck	Environmental Policy Analyst, Information Center for the Environment, University of California, Davis
Richard C. Casias	Consultant, Delta Collaboration Associates, Inc.
Claudia Chaidez	Administrative Assistant, Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions, UC Davis Extension

Appendix C: Assessment Overview

Inland Central California Collaborative Planning Assessment

Who is initiating this effort?

The California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, the California Resources Agency, and the California Environmental Protection Agency formed the Tri-Agency Partnership to coordinate State infrastructure development, resource conservation and environmental protection in order to leverage scarce resources, improve planning, and achieve more cost-effective investments. Since State activities affect, and in turn, are affected by local planning and decision-making, the Tri-Agency Partnership seeks to engage in collaborative planning that integrates State interests with local economic, social and environmental goals for the region in order to support smarter growth.

What is the Tri-Agency Partnership's goal?

The goal of the Tri-Agency Partnership is a collaborative effort that integrates local land use planning with State planning processes across the 12-county Inland Central California region to support economic development, mobility, housing availability, a strong agricultural industry, habitat protection, and air and water quality. The 12 counties are: Amador, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Tuolumne, Stanislaus, Mariposa, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern.

Why should other entities and individuals get involved?

The goal for all involved entities will be to develop a vehicle for streamlining and coordination of the decisions, plans and processes that lead to specific transportation infrastructure projects, housing units, economic development, and environmental enhancements.

How will the interview information be used?

Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions of UC Davis Extension will conduct approximately 200 confidential interviews with major transportation, housing, environmental, and economic stakeholders of the Inland Central California area. At the completion of the interviews, Common Ground will conduct an analysis to include current collaborative projects, factors supporting collaboration, barriers to collaboration, key stakeholders, key issues, and recommendations for processes to further collaborative planning in the area. The Tri-Agency Partnership Subcommittee on Collaborative Planning will receive the analysis and decide on best steps to support collaborative planning in the area.

What if I want more information? For more information, please contact Garth Hopkins at 916-654-8175 or garth.hopkins@dot.ca.gov.

Appendix D: Collaborative Planning Assessment Template Interview Format

Opening:

- Introductions
- Purpose of the interview; assure confidentiality
- Geographic scope of the project

Body of Interview:

- Substantive questions
  - How do you see collaborative planning in this region?
  - What concerns and issues need to be addressed to further collaborative planning in this region on transportation infrastructure, economic development, and environmental enhancement issues?
  - What examples are you familiar with of current collaborative efforts in the Inland Central California region? Who is involved in those efforts? Do you have or know where we can get reports, contact information, or background information on those efforts?
  - Which issues and concerns are most important to you? Why?
  - What does a successful collaborative effort look like for you?
  - What barriers to collaboration do you see? (in terms of organizations, other social forces)
  - What possible solutions could be proposed?
  - What sort of information is available that may address the issues? How reliable is that information?

- People questions
  - Who are the other key parties, the "champions", regarding collaborative planning on these issues in the Inland Central California region? (could be either individuals or groups/agencies)
  - How are relationships among the people involved in these issues?
  - Do you have any concerns about how well people involved in these issues would work together? Any ideas for helping a future collaborative group work together well?
  - Are there any parties in these communities who are likely to be concerned about a collaborative effort? How could they be reassured?
  - Are there any parties that should be part of the collaborative process, that you feel have been left out so far?
  - Who else should we be talking with?

- Process questions
  - How have other collaborative problem-solving efforts worked in the past?
  - What else will help make a collaborative effort as productive as it possibly can be?

Closing:

- Summarize key points
- Explain next steps

Appendix E: Interviewees

Common Ground would like to thank all of the interviewees for their generous commitment of time and thoughtful comments to the assessment.

Alameda County	
Dana Cowell	Deputy District Director, California Department of Transportation District 4
Amador County	
Pete Bell	Vice President, Foothill Conservancy
Patrick Blacklock	County Administrative Officer, County of Amador
Susan Grijalva	Planning Director, Amador County Planning Department
Shelley Hance	Executive Director, Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency
Jim Harris	Air Pollution Control Officer, Amador County Air Pollution Control District
Rich Hoffman	Vice President, Jackson Rancheria - Marketing
Ron Mittlebrunn	Executive Director, Amador Economic Development Corporation
Calaveras County	
George Dondero	Executive Director, Calaveras Council of Governments
Robert Garamendi	Owner, Mokelumne Hill Property
Jearl Howard	Agricultural Commissioner, Calaveras County Agriculture and Environmental Management Agency
John Kautz	Chief Executive Officer, Ironstone Vineyards
Tom Mitchell	County Administrative Officer, County of Calaveras
Robert Sellman	Deputy Planning Director, Calaveras County Planning Department
Contra Costa County	
Mark DeSaulnier	Supervisor, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
El Dorado County	
Jim Sayer	President, Sierra Business Council
Fresno County	
Patricia Anderson	Provost and Vice President, Fresno Pacific University – Academic Affairs
Juan Arambula	Supervisor, Fresno County Board of Supervisors
Tom Bohigian	Acting State Director, Office of US Senator Barbara Boxer
Bart Bohn	County Administrative Officer, County of Fresno
David Crow	Executive Director, San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District
Manuel Cunha	President, Nisei Farmers League
Jack Daniel	Director, California Rural Legal Assistance – Litigation, Training and Advocacy
Ned Doffoney	President, Fresno City College

Kirk Doyle	Operations Manager, Harris Farms
Jeronima Echeverria	Provost and Vice President, California State University at Fresno – Academic Affairs
Barbara Goodwin	Executive Director, Council of Fresno County Governments
Kevin Hall	Transportation, Air Quality and Global Warming Chair, Sierra Club – Tehipite Chapter
James Hallowell	President, Fresno Business Council
Debbie Jacobsen	President, Fresno County Farm Bureau
Blake Konczal	Chief Executive Officer, Fresno Area Workforce Investment Corporation
Paula Landis	District Chief, California Department of Water Resources – San Joaquin Valley
Karl Longley	Dean, California State University at Fresno – College of Engineering
Victor Lopez	Mayor, City of Orange Cove
Bill Loudermilk	Regional Manager, California Department of Fish and Game Region 4
Melinda Marks	Executive Officer, San Joaquin River Conservancy
Deborah Nankivell	Chief Executive Officer, Fresno Business Council
Jay Norvell	Acting District Director, California Department of Transportation District 6
Carolina Simunovic	Environmental Health Project Coordinator and Outreach, Fresno Metro Ministries
Andrew Souza	Assistant City Manager, City of Fresno
Dave Spaur	President, Fresno County Economic Development Corporation
Ashley Swearingen	Chief Executive Officer, Fresno Area Collaborative Regional Initiative
John Villeneuve	Transit Planner, Fresno Area Express
Peter Weber	Chair, Regional Jobs Initiative
John Welty	President, California State University at Fresno

Kern County

Peter Belluomini	President, Kern County Farm Bureau
Ronald Brummett	Executive Director, Kern Council of Governments
Jim Crettol	President, Crettol Farms
Michael Neal	Vice President, California State University, Bakersfield–Business and Administrative Services
Suzanne Noble	Senior Coordinator, Western States Petroleum Association
Rodney Palla	Owner, Palla Rosa Farms – Kern Dairy Industry
Barbara Patrick	Supervisor, Kern County Board of Supervisors
Sandra Serrano	President, Bakersfield College
John Skibinski	Acting Field Office Manager, US Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management
David Villarino	Director, United Farm Workers

Kings County

Thomas Haglund	Deputy City Manager, City of Hanford
Ronald Hughes	Transit Manager, Kings Area Rural Transit – Public Transit Agency
John Lehn	President, Kings County Economic Development Corporation
Tony Oliveira	County Supervisor, Kings County Board of Supervisors
Bill Zumwalt	Executive Secretary, Kings County Association of Governments

Madera County

Rick Cosyns	President, Madera County Farm Bureau
Robert Kahn	Executive Director, Madera County Economic Development Commission
Stell Manfredi	Chief Administrative Officer, County of Madera
Herman Perez	Division Administrator, Madera County Department of Education Workforce Development
Jim Taubert	Executive Director, Madera Redevelopment Agency
David Tooley	City Administrator, City of Madera

Mariposa County

Marina Fisher	President, Kiwanis Club
Gary Hickman	Farm Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension Mariposa County
Charles Mosher	Air Pollution Control Officer, Mariposa County Air Pollution Control District
Michael Tollefson	Superintendent, US Department of Interior, National Park Service – Yosemite National Park

Merced County

Andrea Baker	Director, Merced County Department of Workforce Investment
Jesse Brown	Executive Director, Merced County Association of Governments
Benjamin Duran	President, Merced College
Ernie Flores	Executive Director, Central Valley Opportunity Center
Bob Rucker	President, Rucker Construction, Inc.
Esteban Soriano	Vice Chancellor, University of California at Merced
Dr. Tom Van Groningen	Chair, County Bank Board of Directors
Chris White	Chairman, Central California Irrigation District

Sacramento County

Alan Aguilar	Associate Analyst, California Department of Water Resources Center District
Glenn Bailey	Associate Transportation Planner, California Department of Transportation
Anne Baker	Deputy Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency
Drew Bohan	Undersecretary, California Environmental Protection Agency – Policy
Emil Calzascia	Chief, California Department of Water Resources Central District – Water Management

Christopher Carlisle	Principal Consultant, Assemblywoman Nicole Parra
Michael Carroll	Director, Fannie Mae Central Valley Partnership Office
Banky Curtis	Regional Manager, California Department of Fish and Game Region 2
James Eicher	Acting Field Manager, US Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management
Larry Eng	Deputy Regional Manager, California Department of Fish and Game Region 2
Brent Harrington	President, Regional Council of Rural Counties
Mike Jewell	Chief of Central California/Nevada Section, US Army Corps of Engineers
Trish Kelly	Program Consultant, California Center for Regional Leadership
Maiser Khaled	Chief, Federal Highways Administration – District Operations
Rick Lehman	Partner - Lehman, English, Kelly & O'Keefe
Mark Leja	Chief, California Department of Transportation – Division of Design
Mike Leonardo	District Director, California Department of Transportation District 6
Dennis O'Bryant	Acting Assistant Director, California Department of Conservation – Land Resource Protection
Lowell Ploss	Deputy Regional Director, San Joaquin River Group Authority
Terry Roberts	Director, State Clearinghouse, Governor's Office of Planning & Research
Bob Schneider	Chairman, California Water Resources Control Board
Rusty Selix	Executive Director, California Association of Council of Governments
Lynn Terry	Deputy Executive Officer, California Air Resources Board
Elaine Trevino	Deputy Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture – Ag Export
Kenneth Trott	Executive Regulatory Compliance Specialist, California Department of Food and Agriculture
Robert Wiener	Executive Director, California Coalition for Rural Housing
Diane Windham	Area Recovery Coordinator, NOAA Fisheries
Karl Winkler	Chief, California Department of Water Resources Central District
Austin Wiswell	Division Chief, California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics
Patrick Wright	Director, California Bay-Delta Authority

San Francisco County

James Corless	Senior Planner, Metropolitan Transportation Commissions

San Joaquin County

Kome Ajise	District Director, California Department of Transportation District 10
Andrew Chesley	Deputy Executive Director, San Joaquin Council of Governments
Julia Greene	Executive Director, San Joaquin Council of Governments
Ann Johnston	Councilmember, Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton – Steering Committee
Michael Locke	President, San Joaquin Partnership

Jose Rodriguez	Executive Director, El Concilio
Raul Rodriguez	President, San Joaquin Delta College
David Simpson	District Conservationist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Area – Stockton

Solano County

Bernie Weingardt	Deputy Regional Forester, USDA Forest Service Region 5

Stanislaus County

Bill Bassitt	Chief Executive Officer, Alliance
Rich Chubon	Executive Director, County of Stanislaus Housing Authority
Kurtis Clark	Director, Small Business Development Center
Jack Crist	City Manager, City of Modesto
Lark Downs	Senior Regional Planner, Stanislaus Council of Governments
Orion Fulton	Project Coordinator, Great Valley Center – New Valley Connexions
Saul Garcia	Director, California Rural Legal Assistance
Catherine Hallinan	Staff Attorney, California Rural Legal Assistance
Doug Jackson	Program Manager, Great Valley Center
Brad Kilger	Director, City of Modesto – Department of Community and Economic Development
Holly King	Agricultural Programs Manager, Great Valley Center
Kirk Lindsey	Chairman, Brite Transport Systems, Inc.
Larry Martin	Vice President, E&J Gallo Winery, Inc.
Maggie Mejia	President, Latino Community Roundtable
Noe Paramo	Program Director, Central Valley Partnership
Terry Plett	Director, Stanislaus County – Department of Employment and Training
Carolyn Ratto	Program Manager, Great Valley Center – New Valley Connexions
Ed Thompson	California Director, American Farmland Trust
Carol Whiteside	President, Great Valley Center
Gary Yribarren	LEGACI Grants Coordinator, Great Valley Center

Tulare County

Peter Carey	Executive Director, Self-Help Enterprises
Joseph Daniel	Administrator, Tulare County Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
George Finney	Executive Secretary, Tulare County Association of Governments
Jesus Gamboa	Mayor, City of Visalia
Brian Haddix,	County Administrative Officer, County of Tulare
Cheryl Lehn	Executive Director, Tulare County Farm Bureau

Richard Martin	Superintendent, US Department of Interior, National Park Service – Kings/Sequoia
Dave Nenna	Tribal Administrator, Tule River Reservation
Carolyn Rose	Executive Director, Community Services and Employment Training, Inc.
Paul Saldana	President, Tulare County Economic Development Corporation
Ed Todd	City Manager, City of Dinuba

Tuolumne County

Stan Anderson	Planning and Development Manager, Tuolumne Me-Wuk Rancheria
Greg Applegate	City Administrator, City of Sonora
Mike Ayala	Commander, California Highway Patrol
Larry Busby	Executive Director, Sierra Economic Development District
Candace Katosic	Director, Mother Lode Job Training
Judy Halling	Director, Yes Partnership – Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency
Richard Nutting	Retired
Marlee Powell	Councilmember, City of Sonora

Yolo County

William French	Chief Executive Officer, Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Greg Sparks	Regional Director, Mercy Housing California Region

Yuba County

Ilene Jacobs	Director, California Rural Legal Assistance – Litigation Advocacy and Training